

Issue — 1

Hand in Hand

Manual

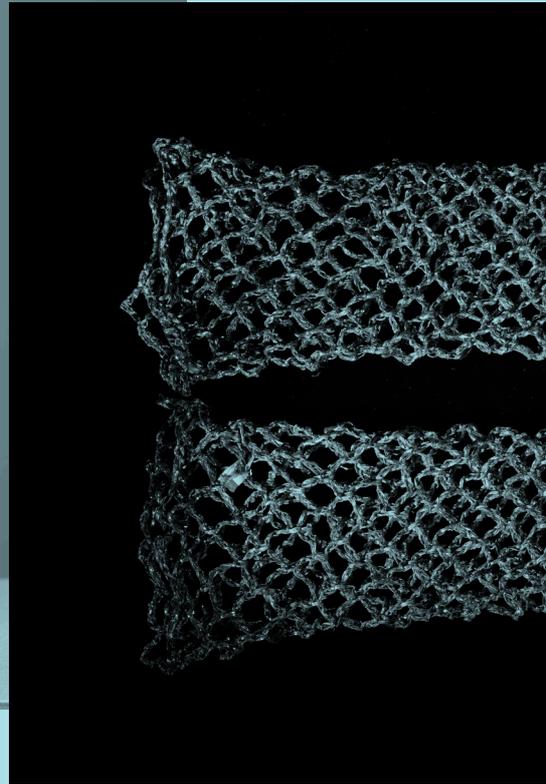


Fall 2019



Fall 2013

Manual



Manual

224 Benefit Street
Providence, RI 02903
United States
Manual@risd.edu
risdmuseum.org

Issue — 1 / Fall 2013 / *Hand in Hand*

RISD Museum director: John Smith
Manual Editor-in-chief: Sarah Ganz Blythe
with S. Hollis Mickey
Editor: Amy Pickworth
Graphic designers: Derek Schusterbauer
and Colin Frazer
Photography: Erik Gould
(unless otherwise noted)
Printer: Meridian

Special thanks to Denise Bastien, Gina
Borromeo, Laurie Brewer, Alison Chang,
Deborah Clemons, Erik Gould, Sionan
Guenther, Jan Howard, Kate Irvin,
Maureen C. O'Brien, Emily Peters, and
Glenn Stinson.

Manual: a journal about art and its making
(ISSN 2329-9193) is produced twice yearly
by the RISD Museum.

Contents © 2013 Museum of Art,
Rhode Island School of Design

Manual is mailed to RISD Museum
Members at the Friend and
Radeke Circle levels. It is also available
for sale in RISD WORKS and online at
risdworks.com.

(cover)

American
Oversleeves from a wedding dress, ca. 1830
Silk, possibly Chinese for export
L: 47 cm. (18 ½ in.)
Gift of Theodore Francis Green 69.140.12

(end papers & back cover)

French
Corbel depicting two hands holding a barrel
(left side, right side, and detail on back cover),
ca. 1175–1200
Stone
41.3 × 19.1 × 18.1 cm. (16 ¾ × 7 ½ × 7 ⅛ in.)
Jesse Metcalf Fund and
Museum Works of Art Fund 51.316

Attributed to Elsa Schiaparelli, designer
Italian, 1890–1973
Gloves, 1930–1939
Looped metallic yarn
68.6 × 7.6 cm. (27 × 3 in.)
Gift of the Estate of Mrs. Edith Stuyvesant
Vanderbilt Gerry 59.031.1



[Sheila Bonde](#) is a professor of archaeology and the history of art and architecture at Brown University. Bonde's recent publications consider the ethics of representation and the revival of antiquity in the Middle Ages.

[Robert Brinkerhoff](#) is a professor of illustration at the Rhode Island School of Design. As an illustrator and designer, his clients have included corporations, institutions of higher learning, and regional and national publications.

Curator [Kate Irvin](#) is the head of the RISD Museum's Department of Costume and Textiles. Her recent exhibitions range from men's fashion to Islamic clothing and Chinese Taoist robes. With Laurie Brewer, she authored *Artist/Rebel/Dandy: Men of Fashion* (Yale, 2013)

[James McShane](#) is a cartoonist living in Providence, Rhode Island. His work has appeared in the *New York Times*; *Kramers Ergot*; *Believer* magazine; *Paper Rodeo*; *Yale Anthology of Graphic Fiction, Cartoons, and True Stories*; *Smoke Signal*; *Taffy Hips*; and *Orang Magazin*.

[Maureen C. O'Brien](#) is the curator of painting and sculpture at the RISD Museum and a specialist in 19th-century American and European painting. Author of *Edgar Degas: Six Friends at Dieppe*, she has a particular interest in the personal relationships between artists and their subjects.

[Elizabeth A. Williams](#) is a curator of decorative arts and design at the RISD Museum. She specializes in late 19th-century American silver with a specific focus on the Gorham Manufacturing Company.

Rena Small

American, b. 1954

Richard Misrach, from the series *Artists' Hands*, 1999,

Gelatin silver print

Image: 19 × 24 cm. (7 ½ × 7 ⅞ in.)

Gift of the artist 2013.43

© Rena Small

8	—	From the Files Paired patterns for production Elizabeth Williams
10	—	Double Take Mobile devotion Sheila Bonde & Robert Brinkerhoff
14	—	Artist on Art <i>Intaglio Imbroglia</i> James McShane
18	—	Object Lesson <i>The Reluctant Wife</i> Copley's companion paintings Maureen C. O'Brien
33	—	Portfolio Loose links & clear couplings
44	—	How To The making of a double-weave Kate Irvin

Hand in Hand

You hold the inaugural issue of *Manual*, a twice-yearly publication by the RISD Museum. The theme of this first issue is “hand in hand,” a phrase first recorded in the 16th century. Its early usage described the clasping of palm to palm, but the term has since come to encompass more than this literal meaning. To be hand in hand is also to be connected, joined, concurrent, well matched.

Thumb through these pages to find rigorous, imaginative musings as artists and academics make solid contact, gesture wildly, and put their fingers on the pulse of new ideas. In your grasp, an open invitation to explore objects and materials, and the meanings and makings of things.

Columns

[From the Files](#) pries open the archive, [Double Take](#) looks at one object two different ways, [Artist on Art](#) offers a creative response by an invited artist, [Object Lesson](#) exposes the stories behind objects, [Portfolio](#) presents a series of objects on a theme, [How To](#) explores the making of an object



Object: Design for Martelé creamer and sugar bowl, 1903

Materials: Pencil and crayon on paper

Dimensions: Each 16½ × 12½ cm. (6½ × 5 in.)

Acquisition: Gift of Lenox, Incorporated 2005.118.45.2208-2209

Chaser: Otto Colmetz American, b. Australia, 1863-1950; active at Gorham 1895-1910

Silversmith: H. A. Taylor Active at Gorham 1902-1903 Gorham Manufacturing Company American, 1831-present

From the Files

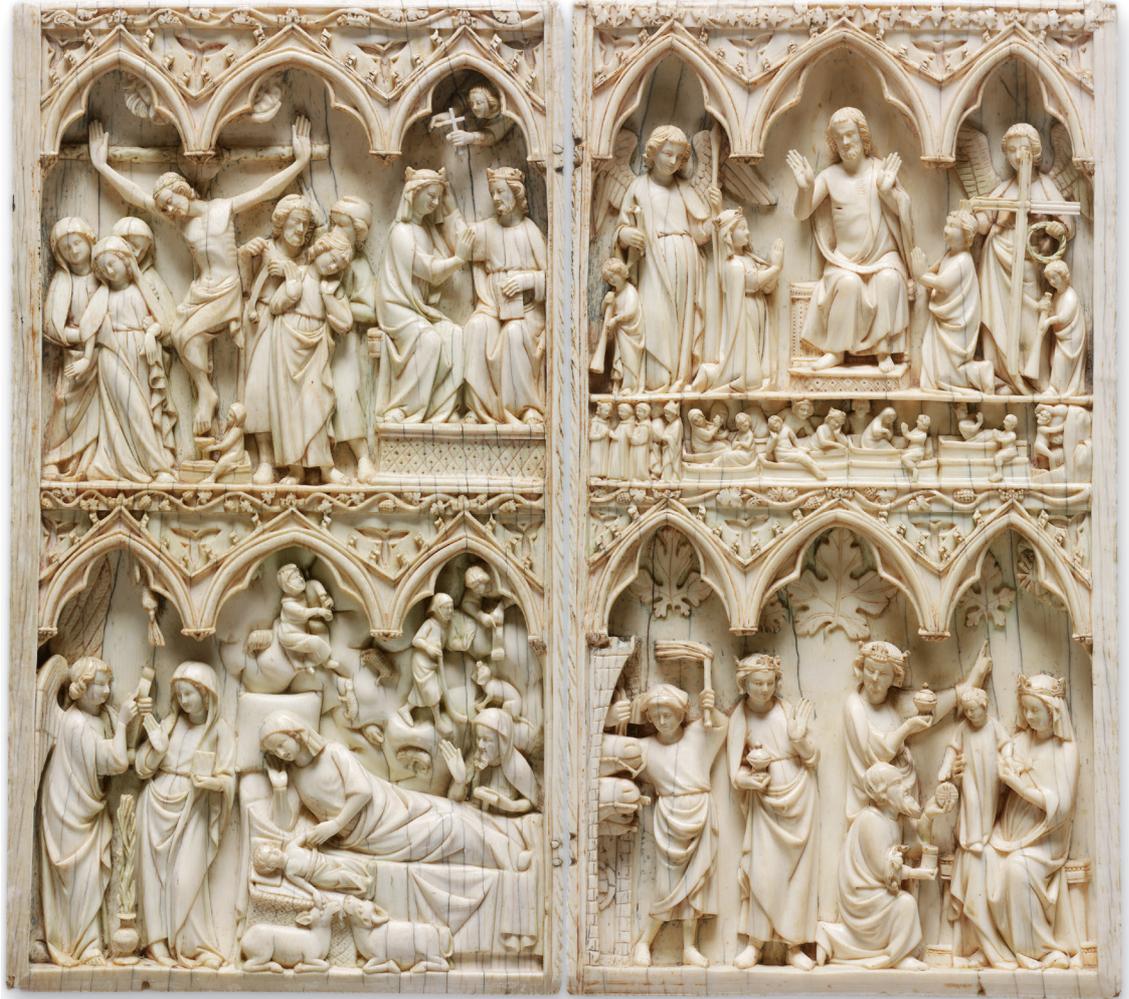


Gorham Manufacturing Company Design for Martelé Creamer and Sugar Bowl, 1903

Founded in Providence in 1831, Gorham was one of the most influential American silver companies of the 19th and 20th centuries. The notations on this pair of designs, originally part of the company's archives, yield a surprising amount of production information, specifying the vessels' capacities and the gauge of the silver to be used. The cutout profiles detail their precise forms.

Tracing the Gorham code letters DGL to the company's costing records reveals that the creamer and sugar bowl were part of a six-piece coffee and tea service in the Martelé line, one of the company's most celebrated designs, featuring sinuous hand-hammered Art Nouveau motifs. Costing records for these pieces indicate the use of a silver composition of .950—finer than the sterling standard of .925—and note that fabrication of the creamer and sugar bowl required 41.4 ounces of silver and 87 hours of hand-chased decoration. It cost the factory \$225 to make these pieces, which retailed for much higher prices.

Elizabeth Williams



French, Île de France
Diptych with scenes of the the Nativity,
the Crucifixion, and the Last Judgment, 1275–1325
Ivory with traces of polychromy
Each panel 24.1 × 13.3 cm. (9 ½ × 5 ¼ in.)
Museum Appropriation Fund 22.201

Take Double

[Robert Brinkerhoff](#): This diptych is small, only about ten inches by nine inches when open, yet some potent storytelling unfolds within its close quarters, with every inch of space put to elegant use. The flow of the pictorial narrative is unusual to our 21st-century sensibilities, beginning in the lower left with the Annunciation and the birth of Christ, followed by the heraldic arrival of the three kings in the lower right. The top registers are dedicated to Christ's crucifixion and Mary's celestial coronation, paired with the Last Judgment of Christ, who reigns omnipotent as the wee spirits of Earth climb from sarcophagi beneath his feet. What a story. And it's told with exquisite eloquence and economy in a space of 90 square inches.

This was an object of prayerful reflection for the person who owned it. Its panels reveal a craftsmanship that signifies the object's importance to both maker and owner. But such impressive technique underscores something even more culturally fascinating—the indispensable role of visual narrative as a vehicle for stories that matter to us. I bring to this encounter my perspective as an illustrator, dedicated to the distillation of message and meaning in elaborately encoded constellations of visual signs. It's no surprise, then, that I would be particularly struck by this maker's mastery of narrative form.

There are many structural likenesses between medieval art and contemporary forms such as comics, which continue to evolve in sophisticated ways. Check out Chris Ware's most recent accomplishment, *Building Stories*—the architecture of page and picture become one, and reading it is as engaging as a 300-page novel. While the subject matter of *Building Stories* differs significantly from what we see here, the formal and temporal aspects of both reading experiences are sensitive to the architecture of pictorial narrative, transcending boundaries of space and time. In the diptych's lower left panel, for example, we decipher the story of the Annunciation and the birth of Christ almost simultaneously, accompanied by the shepherds and their flocks embedded in the hills beyond.

Consider for a moment the enormous creative challenge faced by the maker of this object: wordlessly tell the story of Jesus Christ and his mother—from Madonna and Child to grieving mother and martyred son to King and Queen of Heaven—and make it small enough that the person reading the story can tuck it in a satchel when traveling to strange lands. Make sure they can study it while resting beneath a tree, reflect on it before dimming the candle at night, carrying its significance in their heart and dreams. Lifetimes unfold in this diminutive sacred object, and we too continue to learn from its eloquence.

French, Île de France
Diptych with scenes of the the Nativity,
the Crucifixion, and the Last Judgment, 1275–1325
(View of back)
Ivory with traces of polychromy
Each panel 24.1 × 13.3 cm. (9 ½ × 5 ¼ in.)
Museum Appropriation Fund 22.201

Double

Take

[Sheila Bonde](#): This remarkable diptych is carved from elephant ivory, a material seldom used in northern Europe before about 1250, when a rise in its import led to the mass production of luxury objects, especially for secular patrons. Ivory was prized for its beauty, its rarity, and its ability to take a polish while retaining intricate detail. This piece once featured color: traces of pigment are caught in the drapery folds, and gilding can be seen on some of the arches. Stored folded and opened for private devotion, the diptych was a smaller equivalent of a church altarpiece. Once opened, it invites us to inspect each scene carefully.

The narrative, read chronologically, begins at the lower left corner with the Annunciation, which features an angel confronting Mary, who lifts her hands in astonishment. It continues to the right with the Nativity; Mary and her infant are tilted for better display for the patron's devotion. In the next frame, the eye is led to the scene through the stable, where the muzzles of the three kings' horses are visible. The narrative continues in the upper left with the Crucifixion. This moment of grief is followed by Christ's resurrection, with Christ crowning Mary in heaven. The last scene, on the right panel, draws us forward to the Last Judgment. This scene is divided into two, with a tiny register below in which people are being summoned for judgment. Some good people line up dutifully at Christ's right, but most of the register is dedicated to the (more lively) malefactors, who crawl naked out of their tombs to confront the mouth of hell, ready to swallow them up. Above this, Christ is enthroned in judgment, with donors—such as the patron of this diptych—kneeling to either side.

Having read these scenes in chronological order, we can also interpret the diptych typologically. In a typological reading, an early biblical scene predicts or prefigures a later event. For example, Christ's birth, located on the bottom left, prefigures the scene above it, which depicts his death. This mode of reading allowed the patron to understand that Christ was born to be a sacrifice.

Closing the diptych shows us how very thin this object is. Despite that, the artists who carved it conveyed a remarkable sense of depth. The diptych's scale and function may seem familiar to modern users of Kindles or iPads—intimate handheld devices that provide images for private viewing. Each time the patron closed this work after prayer, he or she must have been very eager for the next opportunity to reopen it.

Selected Bibliography

- Koechlin, Raymond. *Les ivoires gothiques français*. Paris: Picard, 1924, vol. I: 180–82; Vol. II: no. 348 (bis), pl. LXXX.
- Randall, Jr., Richard H. *The Golden Age of Ivory: Gothic Carvings in North American Collections*. New York: Hudson Hills, 1993, 97: 85–86.
- Rowe, L. E. "A Gothic Ivory," *Bulletin of the Rhode Island School of Design*. 1 (1923): 1–3.
- Transformations of the Court Style: Gothic Art in Europe, 1270–1330*. Brown University, 1977, 18: 60–61.



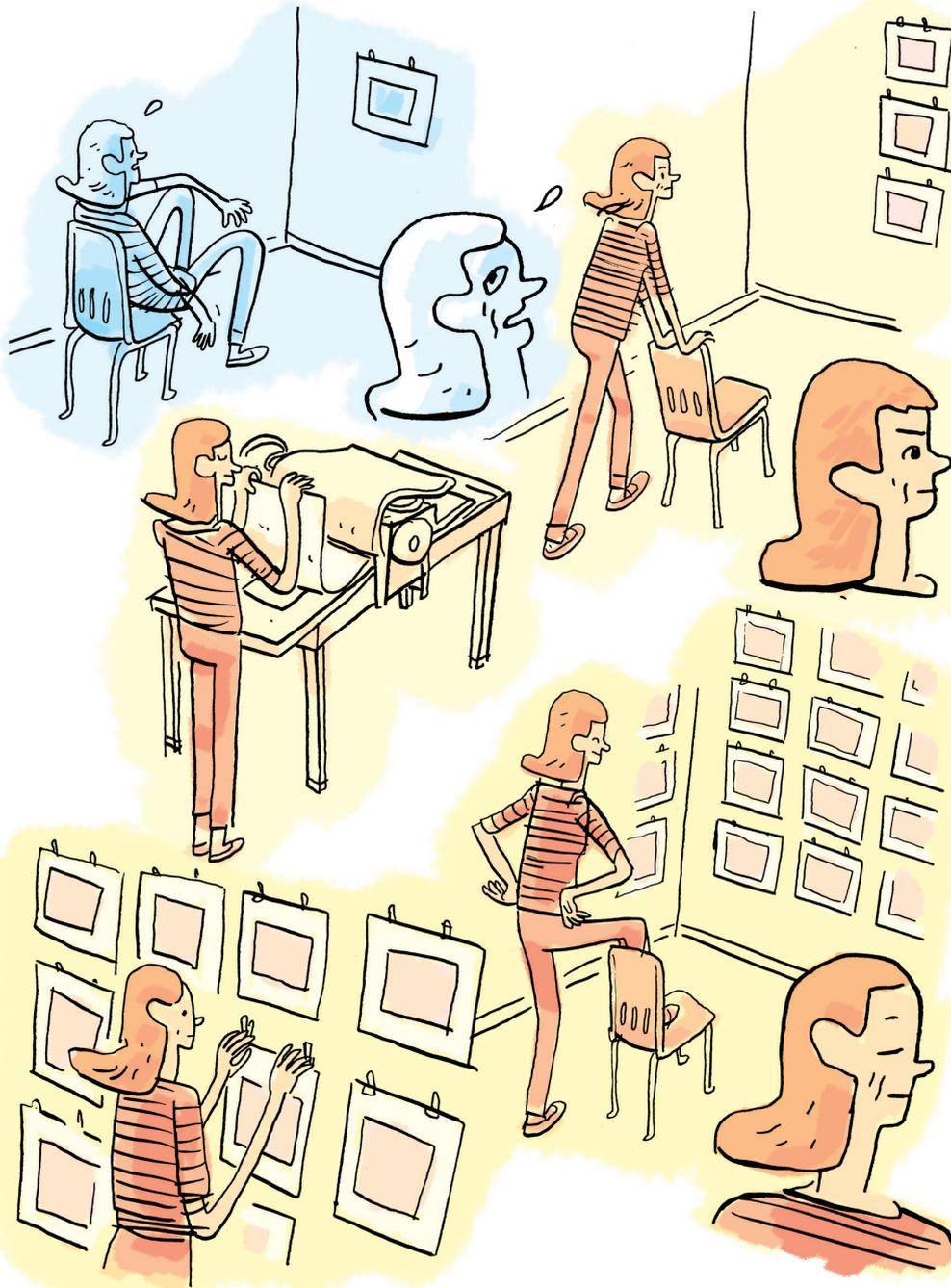
INTAGLIO IMBROGLIO

BY JAMES MESHANE









Fall 2013

Manual



The Reluctant Wife

Maureen C. O'Brien

Three portraits by John Singleton Copley (1738–1815) in the RISD Museum collection convey an unusual narrative of marriage and self-presentation. Created between 1764 and 1773, they depict Moses Gill of Massachusetts, his first wife, Sarah Prince Gill, and his second wife, Rebecca Boylston Gill. The portraits remained in family hands until they arrived in Providence in 1906, each preserved in its original carved and gilded Rococo frame.¹ Their similarities extend to compositional conceits derived from European prototypes and to costumes that combine ideals of American and continental style. Moses Gill appears indoors while Sarah and Rebecca are in landscape settings, and posed as if facing one another and flanking their spouse. The trio is further allied by Copley's crisp draftsmanship and the dominant hues of luxurious textiles. When the portraits are examined independently, the family grouping uncouples as Copley discovers the material of individual character in each sitter's personal history.

19
/
48

Issue—1

FIG. 1

John Singleton Copley

Portrait of Sarah Prince Gill (detail), 1764

Oil on canvas

126.4 × 100.3 cm. (49 ¹/₁₆ × 39 ¹/₂ in.)

Jesse Metcalf Fund 07.118

The realism of Copley's style greatly appealed to the landowning, mercantile, and professional classes who participated in the culture of consumerism and display of colonial Boston. Flattering embellishments drew attention to a sitter's social station but, like historical novels, these are depictions grounded in fact. Each of the Gill subjects projects wealth and accomplishment, but Moses and Rebecca wear their status with a confidence that is easily discerned.² Sarah's portrait reflects her conflict with worldly aspirations and may hint at her reluctance to be cast in the role of wife.

Copley was just 26 years old when he received the commission to paint Moses and Sarah Gill, but he had already established himself as Boston's most advanced portraitist. Since important colonial portraits were intended to represent class as well as likeness, it was Copley's responsibility to incorporate the codes of presentation that would confirm a client's social status. He understood his patrons' ambitions and knew which references and accessories could be used to create the romantic fictions his sitters required.³

Although Copley rose quickly to the top of his profession, his own path to success began at a lower end of the social spectrum. He was born in Boston in 1738 and raised near the Long Wharf waterfront, where his parents sold tobacco. After his father died, his mother married Peter Pelham, an English portrait engraver and schoolteacher whose shop served as his stepson's "academy." Copley learned to draw by copying engravings and by studying books on anatomy and perspective. At the same time, he was introduced to the practices of trade and the flood of commodities that fed the city's desire for luxury goods. The ability to paint columns and expensive clothing, furniture, and jewelry became a useful tool in Copley's

FIG. 2
John Singleton Copley, American, 1738–1815
Moses Gill, ca. 1759
Oil and gold leaf on copper
4.1 × 2.9 cm. (1 5/8 × 1 1/8 in.)
The Metropolitan Museum of Art



kit, complementing his exceptional skill at painting likenesses. In the late 1760s, at the peak of his American career, he charged £20 for a large portrait and earned about £300 per year.⁴ He nevertheless lamented being perceived as a provider of services, and complained that “the people generally regard [painting] no more than any other usefull trade, as they sometimes term it, like that of a Carpenter tailor or shew maker, not as one of the most noble Arts in the World.”⁵

Copley learned painting technique by studying the works of other artists practicing in Boston, including John Smibert, its leading portraitist until his death in 1751.⁶ But his most dramatic advances took place around 1755, with the arrival in Boston of the English painter Joseph Blackburn. By the time Copley received the Gill commission, he had absorbed Blackburn’s manner and surpassed him in the depiction of refined settings and narrative-enhancing poses. He had also become particularly adept at costuming his sitters with “invented dress” often based on English and European fashions.⁷

Copley was already known to Moses Gill (1734–1800) in 1764, when he was commissioned to make formal portraits of the successful hardware merchant and his wife. He had previously depicted Gill around 1759 in a miniature oval portrait that was set in a gold pendant with a lock of hair, presumably as a gift for his betrothed⁸ [Fig. 2]. Copley’s lively brushstrokes describe a plump young man wearing a bright red coat over an embroidered gold vest. His gaze is slightly lowered, as if modestly offering himself to his beloved.

In contrast, the large formal portrait that Copley painted in 1764 fully represented the enhanced social position of the now 30-year-old merchant, advertising his new level of wealth and political capital.⁹ No longer a humble suitor, Gill is presented as lord of the manor in a fictional interior suggested by drapery and a paneled door [Fig. 3]. He leans on a mahogany baluster and holds a handwritten note in one hand while resting the other on his hip, a relaxed stance evoking classical sculptures whose poses had already been appropriated in British portraits.¹⁰ Gill wears a well-groomed wig and displays the comfortable girth of a landowner who dines on the bounty of his substantial properties. This confidence extends to his clothing, an open coat of blue velvet with a gray silk lining and a matching silk waistcoat. Although the costume is at least partially invented, it suited Gill, whose personal inventory included such fashionable attire as a “suit pearl color cloath.”¹¹

In this second portrait of Gill, Copley captured a gaze that suggests contentment as much as prosperity, but a happy joining of affection and fortune is harder to tease from the companion portrait of his first wife. Instead of mirroring the satisfaction exuded by her husband, Sarah Prince Gill (1728–1771) seems hesitant to bask in worldly esteem. The robust folds of her blue satin gown are more animated than her gaze. Her dress, a variant of one that adorns other Copley sitters, was probably never worn by Sarah.¹² The pearls woven through her hair and entwined in a silk scarf are similarly arranged in the coiffures of many of Copley’s female patrons. Sarah is not beautiful, and there is evidence that Copley may have made an effort to improve her appearance: his contemporaneous pastel portrait of her [Fig. 5] reveals an underbite, a feature minimized in the large oil version [Fig. 4].

While Copley’s marriage portraits often depicted one partner in an interior setting and the other outdoors, Sarah’s placement against a rocky ledge seems calculated to emphasize her reserve, and may be the result of a negotiation with Copley for a privately meaningful setting rather than an aggrandizing fiction. This meditative landscape sets Sarah apart from material concerns and mirrors what is known of her spiritual nature. In her journal, she described finding serenity of soul in God, “a shadow of a great Rock in a Weary Land.”¹³ The leather-bound book that rests in her lap, a traditional attribute of education or piety, also serves as a personal signifier, as Sarah herself called books and study “my favourite employment.”¹⁴

Sarah was born in Boston, the fourth child of an Englishwoman, Deborah Denny Prince, and Reverend Thomas Prince, the rector of Old South Church. Reverend Prince guided Sarah’s religious growth and encouraged her intellectual development by giving her free access to his extensive library. At the age of 15, she began writing a spiritual narrative of her Christian devotion and her burning desire for moral improvement. It was there that she praised God for her access to books: “For to have such a Father, such Ministers, such Sister, such Books as he favoured me with. How can I be eno’ Thankfull!!!”¹⁵

FIG. 3

John Singleton Copley
Portrait of the Honorable Moses Gill, Esq., 1764
Oil on canvas
126.4 × 100.3 cm. (49 1/16 × 39 1/2 in.)
Jesse Metcalf Fund 07.117





Sarah's journal reveals an ascetic young woman who challenged her own material and social desires and unsparingly recounted her weaknesses. In entries written between 1743 and 1764, her sentiments ranged from euphoria to melancholy as she examined her spiritual progress and recorded her failures. Her diaristic practice, common to full members of American Calvinist church communities, was enriched by her command of biblical texts, psalms, hymns, and sermons.¹⁶ She employed their language when describing her religious consciousness and her mindful observance of the Sabbath.

Spiritual submission did not prohibit Sarah from nurturing affectionate relationships. Her journal revealed tender devotion to family, particularly in the entries she wrote following the deaths of her father and siblings. She also conducted epistolary friendships with other women, including her closest friend and "sister of the heart," Esther Edwards Burr, a daughter of the American preacher and theologian Jonathan Edwards. The two women corresponded fervently after Sarah visited her newly married friend in New Jersey in 1753 and continued until 1758.¹⁷ Sarah's letters are lost, but Esther's responses to them reveal the complexity of Sarah's emotional and intellectual life. They discussed the meaning of true friendship and shared opinions about literature that contributed to the improvement of character. But Sarah had little patience for Esther's narratives of domestic life, and believed that matrimony forced women to sacrifice personal and intellectual independence. Both Esther and her husband, Reverend Aaron Burr, made efforts to change Sarah's mind, but she saw no advantage, declaring that in marriage "Men's [brains] increase in Proportion to the Decrease of the Women's."¹⁸ Responding to Sarah's anti-matrimonial treatise, Aaron Burr suggested she advise highly intelligent women that they might eventually improve a spouse: "As to ... Women's loosing their Brains upon marrying ... [offer] a Word of Encouragement to those ladies that cant find Gentlemen of equal Brains to themselves to marry however, in Hopes there will be a balance afterward."¹⁹

25

v

48

Issue—1

FIG. 4

John Singleton Copley
Portrait of Sarah Prince Gill, 1764
 Oil on canvas
 126.4 × 100.3 cm. (49 ³/₁₆ × 39 ¹/₂ in.)
 Jesse Metcalf Fund 07.118

The cause seemed hopeless, for with the exceptions of Reverend Burr and her father, Sarah had encountered few men whose piety and intellect compared with her own. In letters to the Burrs, she spoke disparagingly of several potential suitors, including a widower with two sons, a preacher who finally married another woman, and a man nicknamed “Cats-Paw,” whom Sarah treated badly enough that Esther was provoked to respond: “I cant bare to see you *murder your self*—it had been better that Cats-Paw had done it ... I am almost two vex to write —I wonder in the name of honesty what business you had to run a way time after time when you knew he was a comin — You may repent it when it is two late.”²⁰

Sarah prayed for guidance and for a while was spared the loss of her independence,²¹ but on March 1, 1759, “Marriage Intentions of Sarah Prince and Moses Gill” were recorded in Boston.²² In light of Sarah’s long-held convictions, the union took place with a resolve that would have surprised and gratified the Burrs, but they did not live to celebrate it. Aaron Burr had died of smallpox in 1757, with Esther following six months later. In October 1758, Sarah’s despair had been compounded by the death of her father. Her next journal entry, posted two days before her wedding, confirmed that God had influenced her decision, “having led me to think of changing my state and ... gently dissipating my fears resolving my doubts, and clearing up the Path of Duty.”²³ Two weeks after the wedding, Sarah referred to her bridegroom for the first and only time and cited her marriage goals: “It having pleased God in his sovereign Providence to bring me into a Marriage Union on Mar 27 with one who I Esteem As a Person hopefully Pious and has made me the head of family — I desire with Gratitude to notice his Goodness herein — that I am placed in Comfortable Circumstances on all Accounts ... I beg to walk beside him in my house with a Proper heart and to set an Example to my Family of Virtue and true Piety.”²⁴

Sarah was 31 when she wrote these words. Moses Gill was 25, and while not yet a member of the landed elite, he was well-positioned in Boston trade. His brother, John Gill, was a printer of the *Boston Gazette*, and both brothers belonged to a circle of patriots that included James

Otis, Jr., and John Adams. Few details are known of the couple's married life, but Gill offered Sarah a new social position as head of a household, and Sarah, who in 1767 inherited extensive property in Princeton, Massachusetts, that became the site of their country house, raised her husband's status to landowner. Although they had no children of their own, they adopted one of John Gill's sons and watched over the physical and spiritual well-being of others in the household.²⁵



5

Sarah worked to accept her role, but was challenged by her “forward, Ungovernable, Ungodly servants.” She was even more disappointed with the state of her congregation.²⁶ A bright note was the improvement of her health which, from the time of her marriage, had deprived her of “seasons and places of retirement.”²⁷ In July 1762 she praised God for “restoring me from Lameness,”²⁸ enabling her to leave the house and once again spend time in nature. The consequent lightening of her spirits may have influenced her willingness to be portrayed by Copley.

While Sarah's diary entries express joy only in relation to spiritual gains, there is no evidence that her daily life was particularly unhappy. She had once resisted marriage as a personally undesirable state, but accepted it out of a perceived duty to God and to society. In sitting for Copley, she acknowledged her married role and demonstrated complicity in displaying her family's social station to visitors in her home. For his part, Gill addressed Sarah's expectations for spousal piety through membership in the Congregational Church of Princeton,²⁹ but there is further evidence of compatibility in their shared commitment to political freedom in the American colonies.

27
\
48

Issue—1

FIG. 5

John Singleton Copley
Portrait of Mrs. Moses Gill (Sarah Prince), ca. 1764
 Pastel on linen
 Spencer Museum of Art, The University of Kansas
 Museum purchase: Letha Churchill Walker
 Memorial Art Fund 1973.0092

Correspondence between future president John Adams and the English historian and libertarian Catharine Macaulay provides a rare clue to Sarah's interest in the developments that led to the American Revolutionary War.³⁰ In a first draft of his introductory letter to Macaulay, dated August 9, 1770, Adams identifies their mutual connection: "With great pleasure I received from my Friend Mr. Gill an Intimation, that you had enquired of Sophronia for the Author of a Speculation in a Newspaper which Some one has been pleased to call a Dissertation on the Cannon and feudal Law."³¹ Adams later identified Sarah Prince Gill as Sophronia when speaking of the publication in England of his ideas "that excited so much curiosity among the friends of liberty that Mrs. Macaulay wrote to the daughter of Mr. Prince, a very learned lady in Boston, to enquire who was the writer of them."³² Sarah's correspondence with Macaulay is not documented, nor are her conversations with other women and men about political interests, but at Sarah's death in 1771, an obituary in the *Boston Evening Post* emphatically described her dedication to the right of freedom and its importance to happiness: "she to her latest Hours fervently wished and prayed for the Liberty of the World in general, and of her own Country in particular."³³

After Sarah died, Moses Gill launched a political career, and as a member of the Massachusetts state provincial congress organized the supply committee for the Siege of Boston at the outbreak of the Revolutionary War. From 1780 he served on the Massachusetts legislature, and in 1781 sat on a district court panel that declared slavery incompatible with the state constitution. In 1793, Gill was appointed lieutenant governor of Massachusetts under Samuel Adams, and he briefly served as acting governor in 1799. He inaugurated this important chapter in his life by marrying Rebecca Boylston (1727–1798), a member of a prominent Boston family and a wealthy landowner in her own right. To commemorate the union, he commissioned a portrait of his new wife. This was Rebecca's second opportunity to sit for Copley: he had painted her as a single woman in 1767³⁴ [Fig. 6].

FIG. 6

John Singleton Copley
Rebecca Boylston, 1767
Oil on canvas
127.95 × 102.23 cm. (50 3/8 × 40 1/4 in.)
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
Bequest of Barbara Boylston Bean, 1976.667
Photograph © 2013 Museum of Fine Arts
Boston



6

Rebecca Boylston was 45 when she married Gill; he was 38. She had spent her earlier life as the mistress of the household of her brother, Nicholas Boylston, a wealthy Boston importer. After his death, Rebecca's income and landholdings expanded considerably, and with her marriage in 1772 she joined her personal fortune to Gill's. In her portrait as a married woman [Fig. 7], Rebecca Boylston Gill projects urban sophistication and self-confidence. She wears a variation of the Turkish-style costume Copley had successfully adapted in a portrait of a younger woman, Margaret Kemble Gage of New York, including an embroidered silk turban wound through her hair with a rope of pearls.³⁵ Gold threads decorate the deep red bands at her neckline and waist and a rose-colored mantle drapes across one arm. In contrast to Sarah's woodland setting, Rebecca's landscape is staged with symbols of culture. She stands before a

FIG. 7

John Singleton Copley
Portrait of Rebecca Boylston Gill, 1773
Oil on canvas
126.4 × 100.3 cm. (49 ⁷/₁₆ × 39 ¹/₂ in.)
Museum purchase with funds from Isaac C. Bates, William Gammell, Henry D. Sharpe, Miss Ellen D. Sharpe, Elizabeth A. Shepard, Daniel B. Updike, the Honorable George P. Wetmore, and Mrs. Gustav Radeke 07.120

massive column and rests a hand on a garden urn whose abundant lilies complement her fanciful attire. She is handsome, self-possessed, and not shy to engage in this performance of contemporary status and mode. While distinctly more fashionable than her predecessor, Rebecca resists being characterized as frivolous. She diverged from her family's Loyalist leanings when she married Gill and, like Sarah, elected to support America's progress toward independence.

Copley's mastery of colonial aspirations and material culture combined prevalent values of realism with elegant fictions of staging. Created as luxury goods for wealthy consumers, his portraits reveal 18th-century American ideas about representation of social position and have been interpreted as microcosms of their time. Through skillful integration of observation and fantasy, he delivers compelling evidence of his sitters' character and individuality. Moses Gill's burgeoning ambitions and Rebecca Boylston Gill's middle-age self-esteem are authentic and captivating, but they are not the only types of narratives at which Copley excelled. His subdued interpretation of Sarah Prince Gill's reserve illuminates an 18th-century American woman's story made all the more interesting because of its visual and cultural dissonances.



- 1 See Morrison H. Heckscher, "Copley's Picture Frames," in Carrie Rebola and Paul Staiti, et al., *John Singleton Copley in America* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, distributed by Harry N. Abrams, 1995), 143–59.
- 2 The portraits of Moses and Rebecca Gill were included in the 1995–1996 exhibition *John Singleton Copley in America*, organized by the Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York), and were the subject of scholarly entries in the exhibition catalogue, cited above.
- 3 Copley's reliance on print sources is discussed by Trevor Fairbrother, "John Singleton Copley's Use of British Mezzotints for His American Portraits: A Reappraisal Prompted by New Discoveries," *Arts 55* (March 1981): 122–30.
- 4 Paul Staiti's essay "Accounting for Copley," in Rebola and Staiti, et al., 25–51, discusses the climate of consumption in Copley's Boston. He compares Copley's annual income to that of a highly successful lawyer (£2000 per year) and a professional weaver (£40), 30.
- 5 Staiti, *ibid.*, 35, cites Copley's complaint to an unknown correspondent, ca. 1767.
- 6 Smbert's studio, which sold art supplies and prints, also displayed copies of Old Master paintings that Copley was able to study. Other artists whose work was known to Copley were Joseph Badger, Robert Feke, and John Greenwood. Their limited influence on Copley is discussed in Jules David Prown, *John Singleton Copley: In America 1738–1774* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966), 11–14.
- 7 Copley's sources for both male and female costume are discussed by Aileen Ribeiro, "The Whole Art of Dress: Costume in the Work of John Singleton Copley," in Rebola and Staiti, et al., 103–15; see also Leslie Reinhardt, "The Work of Fancy and Taste: Copley's Invented Dress and the Case of Rebecca Boylston," *Dress 29* (2002): 4–18.
- 8 For further discussion of this miniature, see Carrie Rebola Barratt, "Moses in Miniature: A Recently Discovered Portrait by John Singleton Copley," *Antiques & Fine Art Magazine* (7th Anniversary Issue, 2007): 264–67. Erica Hirshler's "Copley in Miniature" in Rebola and Staiti, et al., 117–42, thoroughly investigates this aspect of Copley's work.
- 9 In his landmark study of various data derived from Copley's works, Prown, 136, relates the sizes of the canvases to the occupations of the sitters. Half of Copley's American portraits, including those of the Gills, were 50 by 40 inches, a size slightly favored by merchants, shippers, and landowners.
- 10 Carol Troyen studies this painting in Rebola and Staiti, et al., 200–2. Troyen proposes the sculpture of Mercury (Uffizi Galleries, Florence) and the Faun of Praxiteles (Capitoline Museums, Rome), both celebrated in Copley's time, as classical antecedents of Gill's pose. She also cites contemporary British use of the pose in an engraving after Thomas Hudson's portrait of George Townsend, ca. 1758.
- 11 Troyen, *ibid.*, 203, n. 7, cites "Mr. Gill's Cloaths" in Gill Papers, American Antiquarian Society, Worcester.
- 12 See discussion in Leslie Reinhardt, "The Work of Fancy and Taste: Copley's Invented Dress and the Case of Rebecca Boylston," *Dress 29* (2002): 4–18.
- 13 Journal entry of August 22, 1757, cited in Sue Lane McCulley and Dorothy Z. Baker, *The Silent and Soft Communion: The Spiritual Narratives of Sarah Pierpont Edwards and Sarah Prince Gill* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2005), 67.
- 14 Thomas Prince, *Dying exercises of Mrs. Deborah Prince and Devout Meditations of Mrs. Sarah Gill, Daughters of the late Reverend Thomas Prince Minister of the south Church*, reprinted by John Myall, 1789, 37, cited in Lucia Bergamasco, *Amour du monde, l'amour de Dieu* (Saint Denis: Presse Universitaire de Vincennes, 2008), 89.
- 15 McCulley and Baker, *The Silent and Soft Communion*, 58, journal entry of March 6, 7, and 8, 1757.
- 16 *Ibid.*, Introduction, xxxvii–xxxviii.
- 17 The Burrs first lived in Newark but moved to Princeton when Aaron Burr was made president of the College of New Jersey (later renamed Princeton University). They had two children—a daughter, Sally, and a son, Aaron Burr, Jr., who became the third vice president of the United States and killed his political rival, Alexander Hamilton, in a duel.
- 18 Letter from Reverend Aaron Burr to Sarah Prince, February 8, 1753, in Carol F. Karslen and Laurie Crumpacker, *The Journal of Esther Edwards Burr, 1754–1757* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1984), 280.
- 19 Letter from Reverend Aaron Burr to Sarah Prince, February 8, 1753, in Karslen and Crumpacker, 280.
- 20 Letter from Esther Burr to Sarah Prince, April 16, 1757, in Karslen and Crumpacker, 194–95.
- 21 In her journal entry of September 19, 1756 (McCulley and Baker, *The Silent and Soft Communion*, 38), Sarah speaks of her "Perplexity with respect to a very interesting Affair" and prays God to enable her to "Consult Duty more than Inclination."
- 22 Bergamasco (*Amour du monde*, 115) raises the possibility that Gill was Cats-Paw. If so, it would mean he waited nearly two years for Sarah's agreement to marry.
- 23 Journal entry, March 25, 1759, McCulley and Baker, *The Silent and Soft Communion*, 75.
- 24 Journal entry, April 15, 1759, *ibid.*, 76.
- 25 In her journal entry of March 9, 1764, Sarah prays for "those young ones who are to go thro' the Small pox in my house" and on April 18 thanks God for "carrying 5 in our Family very Gently thro' the Small Pox so that they are all alive and recovered in health" (*ibid.*, 89, 91).
- 26 Journal entry, December 1759, *ibid.*, 76.
- 27 Journal entry, April 15, 1759, *ibid.*, 76.
- 28 Journal entry, July 1762, *ibid.*, 81.
- 29 In 1768, Gill's gifts to the church included two tankards, one communion plate, two flagons, three chalices, and a baptismal basin, all made of pewter. In 1769 he presented a pulpit bible, and in 1796 two silver chalices made by Paul Revere. "A History of Our Church," First Congregational Church (Princeton, Massachusetts), accessed August 5, 2013, <http://firstchurchprinceton.com/history.php>.
- 30 This compelling history is the subject of an article by Monica Letzring, "Sarah Prince Gill and the John Adams–Catharine Macaulay Correspondence," *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, Third Series, Vol. 88 (1976), 107–11.
- 31 John Adams to Catharine Macaulay, August 9, 1770, in *Diary and Autobiography of John Adams*, ed. by L. H. Butterfield, Leonard C. Faber, and Wendell D. Garrett (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1961), 360, 343; cited in Letzring, *ibid.*, 108. In August 1765, Adams wrote articles for the *Boston Gazette* that were republished in 1768 in the *London Chronicle* as "True Sentiments of America, also known as A Dissertation on the Canon and Feudal Law."
- 32 Letzring, *ibid.*, 109, cites Adams' letter to Mrs. Mercy Warren, July 27, 1807, Massachusetts Historical Society, Collections, 5th Ser., IV (1878), 354–56.
- 33 *Boston Evening Post*, August 12, 1771, cited in Letzring, *ibid.*, 110.
- 34 Carol Troyen points out this distinction in her discussions of both portraits in Rebola and Staiti, et al., 229–33.
- 35 Carrie Rebola Barratt analyzes this style in *John Singleton Copley and Margaret Kemble Gage, Turkish Fashion in 18th-Century America* (San Diego: Putnam Foundation, 1998). Copley describes the painting of the beautiful Mrs. Gage as "beyond Compare the best Lady's portrait I ever Drew" (2), as quoted from Copley to Henry Pelham, November 6, 1771, *Letters and Papers of John Copley and Henry Pelham* (Boston, 1914), 175.

Portfolio

33
/
48

Issue—1

objects are identified on page 46

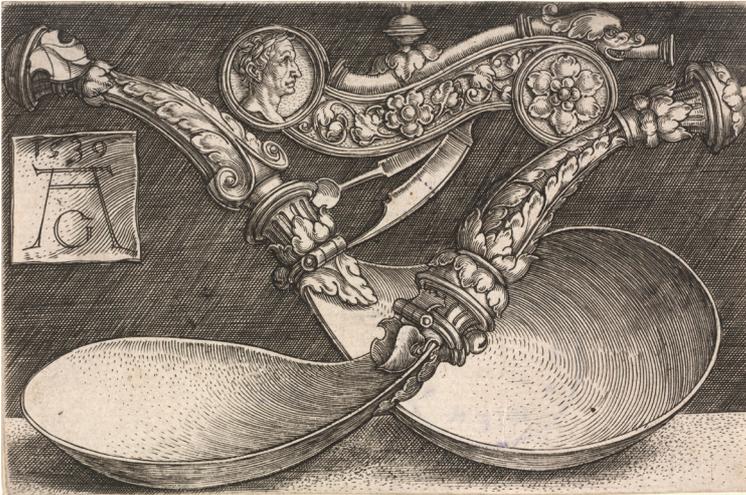




35
/
48

Issue—1





(4)

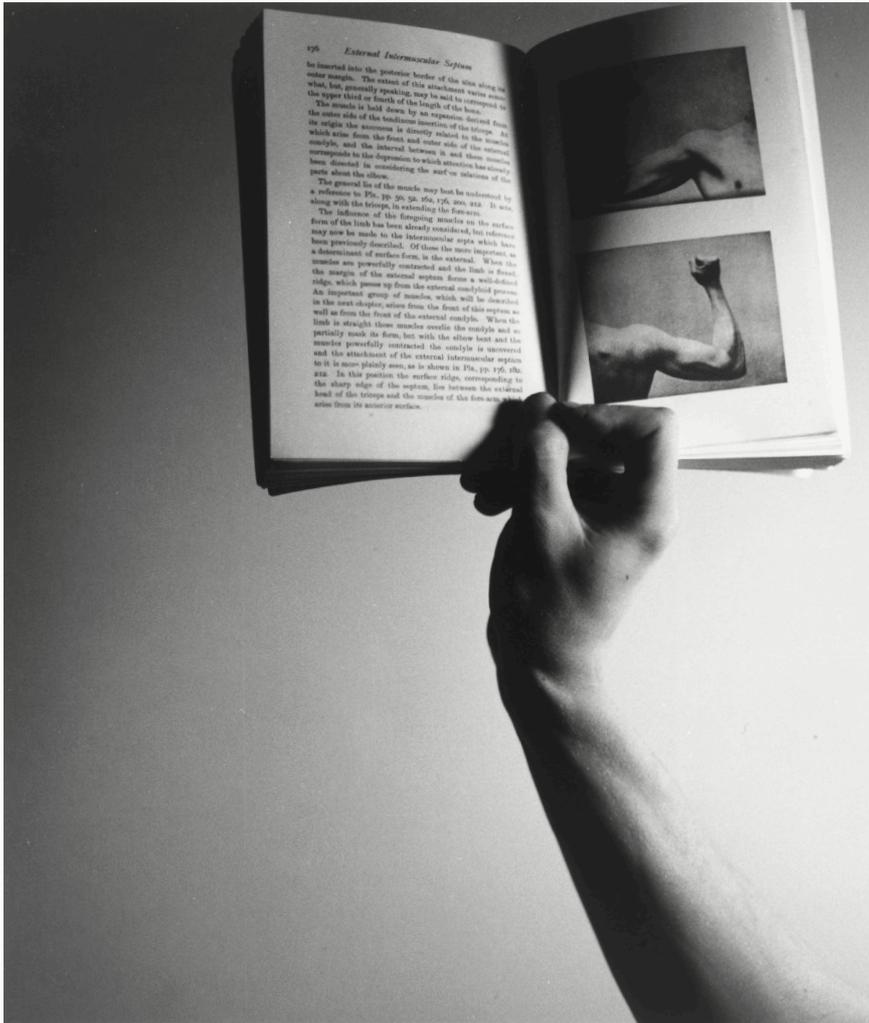


(5)









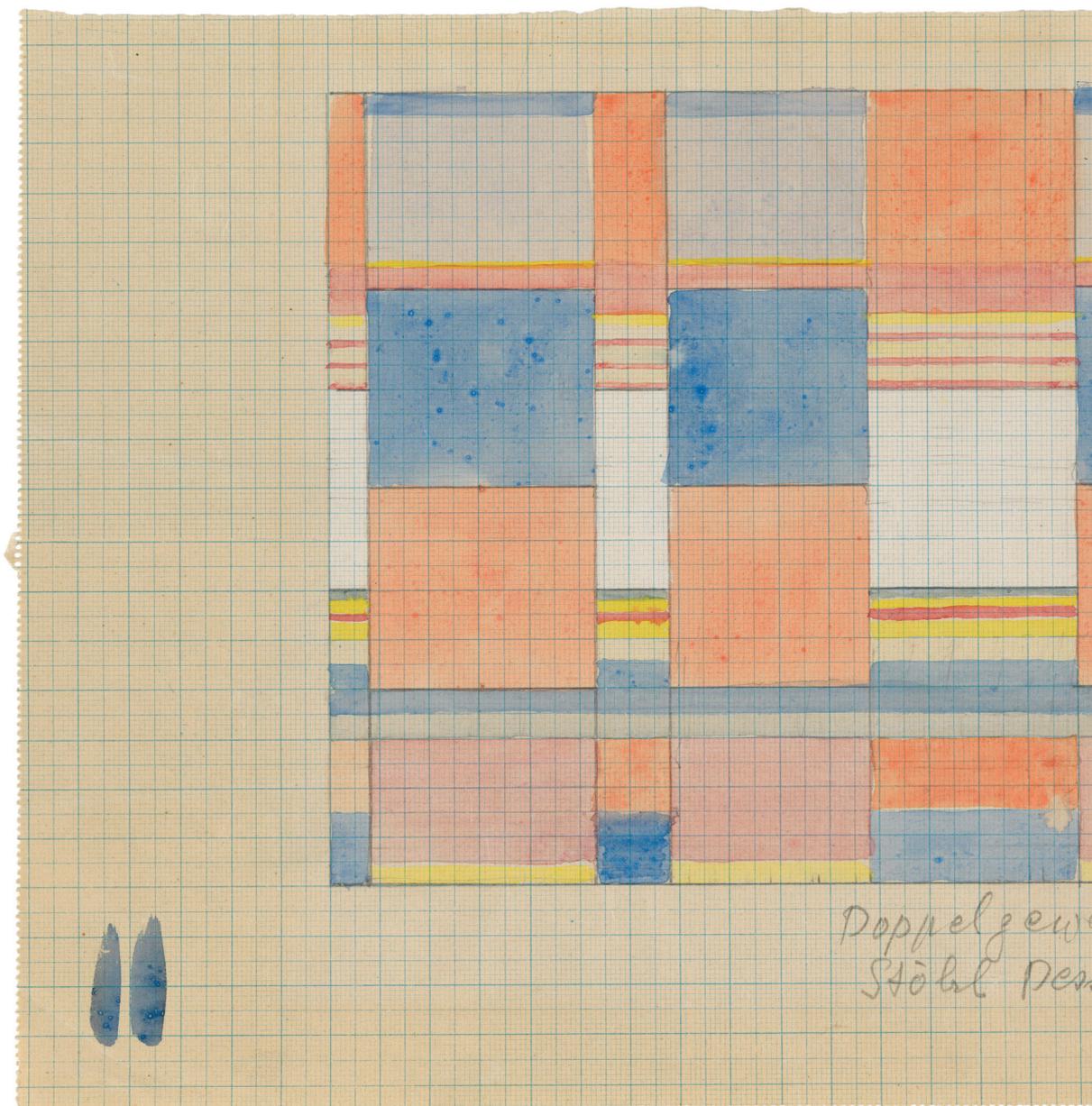
41
/
48

Issue—1





(10)



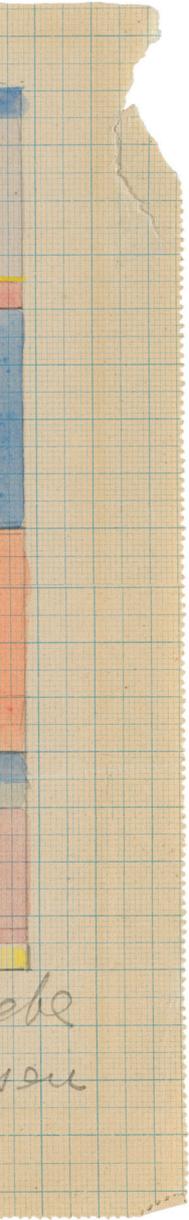
Gunta Stözl
Swiss, b. Germany, 1897–1983
Doppelgewebe (design for a double-weave textile),
1925/1931
Watercolor on square-ruled paper
35.6 × 33.7 cm. (14 × 13⁵/₁₆ in.)
© 2013 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / VG
Bild-Kunst, Bonn
Gift of Ruth Kaufmann 2006.26.3

How To

[The making of a double-weave:](#) Gunta Stölzl's proposal for a double-weave textile is, in its play with color and form, characteristic of the artist's prolific output during her tenure at the famed Bauhaus school. An excellent illustration of the Bauhaus's mission to marry craft and the fine arts, this suggestive study—painted in fluid blocks of watercolor and seemingly tossed off—expresses a spontaneity not often associated with the actual production of textiles. Referred to as *croquis*, from the French word for sketch, such drawings long served to delineate loose ideas. If deemed worthy of industrial production, this preliminary articulation would be translated into a rigidly detailed, hand-drawn draft of the loom set-up specifying weave structure and color choices, followed by the laborious warping of the loom and the time-consuming weaving process. The delicacy of this watercolor belies the complexity of the intended double-weave technique, signaled by Stölzl's title *Doppelgewebe*, a multi-layered structure that simultaneously employs two sets of yarn to create two distinct textile surfaces joined together at intervals.

Stölzl studied at the Bauhaus under the tutelage of Johannes Itten and Paul Klee beginning in 1919, and in 1927 was appointed the only female full-faculty member, or “master,” at the new campus in Dessau, Germany. By generating exploratory designs such as this one during her tenure as head of the weaving workshop, Stölzl nimbly modeled her teaching philosophy: “to loosen up the student and to provide him [sic] with the broadest possible base and with a direction for a systematic approach to his work.”

Kate Irvin



Portfolio

(1)

Janine Antoni
Bahaman, b. 1964
Polich Art Works, manufacturer
Umbilical, 2000
Cast sterling silver of family silverware and negative impressions of artist's mouth and mother's hand
7.6 × 20.3 × 7.6 cm. (3 × 8 × 3 in.)
Courtesy of the artist and Luhring Augustine, New York
Mary B. Jackson Fund 2002.19

(2)

Etruscan
Jar with lid (*stamnos*),
late 4th–3rd century BCE
Bronze
39 × 31.3 cm. (15 1/2 × 12 5/8 in.)
Mary B. Jackson Fund 35.791

(3)

Attributed to Nicolas Bernard Lépicicé
French, 1735–1784
Study of Two Female Arms, One Holding a Rose Garland, 1770–1775
Black and white chalk on prepared paper
47.6 × 40.2 cm. (18 3/4 × 15 7/8 in.)
Helen M. Danforth Acquisition Fund and Mary B. Jackson Fund 1987.082

(4)

Heinrich Aldegrever
German, 1502–ca. 1560
Design for Two Spoons and a Dog Whistle, 1539
Engraving on paper
6.7 × 9.9 cm. (2 5/8 × 3 7/8 in.)
Museum Works of Art Fund 53.011

(5)

Turkish
Qur'an pages, ca. 1335–1350
Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper
Each leaf 28.7 × 18.4 cm. (11 3/8 × 7 3/8 in.)
Gift of Mrs. Celia Robinson Stillwell 84.038

(6)

Mariotto di Nardo
Italian, active ca. 1394–1424
Saint Francis Receiving the Stigmata,
ca. 1408
Tempera and gold on panel
23.5 × 28.9 cm. (9 3/8 × 11 3/8 in.)
Museum Appropriation Fund 17.521

(7)

Roy Lichtenstein
American, 1923–1997
Sweet Dreams Baby!, 1965
Screenprint on paper
90.5 × 64.9 cm. (35 5/8 × 25 5/8 in.)
Museum purchase with funds from the National Endowment for the Arts 75.111
© Estate of Roy Lichtenstein

(8)

Keith Sandberg
American, b. 1954
Untitled, from the portfolio *The Tenth Annual Portfolio of the Photographic Education Society, Rhode Island School of Design*, 1977
Gelatin silver print
18.8 × 16 cm. (7 3/8 × 6 1/4 in.)
Georgianna Sayles Aldrich Fund 77.055.11
© Keith Sandberg

(9)

Attributed to Piu Ou Qua
Chinese, 1737–1820
Guanyin (Bodhisattva of Compassion),
19th century
Ink, color, and gold on paper
44.8 × 28.9 cm. (17 5/8 × 11 3/8 in.)
Bequest of Austin H. King 21.457

(10)

Etruscan
Hand holding a dove, 3rd century BCE
Terracotta
6.3 × 8.9 × 6.3 cm. (2 1/2 × 3 1/2 × 2 1/2 in.)
Gift of Dr. Armand Versaci 1986.165

